Expanding The MEU(SOC) Joint Task Force Enabler Concept

SAW 1998

Subject Area Strategic Issues

EXPANDING THE MEU(SOC) JOINT TASK FORCE ENABLER CONCEPT

Future War Research Paper

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Marine Corps Combat Development Command
28 May 1998

Report Documentation Page

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED
1998		**00-00-1998 to 00-00-1998**

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
Expanding The MEU(SOC) Joint Task Force Enabler Concept	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S)	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) **United States Marine Corps,Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University,2076 South Street, Marine Corps Combat Development Command,Quantico,VA,22134-5068**	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

15. SUBJECT TERMS

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT **unclassified**	b. ABSTRACT **unclassified**	c. THIS PAGE **unclassified**	**Same as Report (SAR)**	**27**	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: Expanding the MEU(SOC) Joint Task Force Enabler Concept

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Thesis: An enhanced operational concept for the MEU(SOC) Joint Task Force Enabler contributes a potentially greater crisis-response capability to the National Command Authority and Regional Commanders in Chief.

Summary: The Joint Task Force Enabler (JTFE) is a command and control capability inherent in the MEU(SOC) mission profile. In practice, the JTFE consists of a AN/TSC-93B super-high frequency sattelite communications van and a complement of twelve Marines which, when employed, provide access to the systems of the Common Operating Environment of the Global Command and Control System. This is a valid notion for enhancing the capability of the MEU(SOC), but this definition of the JTFE does not fully exploit the potential of the concept.

Because the JTFE is still an unfinished and, therefore, emerging concept, we possesses the opportunity to further shape its dimensions before it becomes universally accepted by the Regional Commanders in Chief as simply a sophisticated communications van for the JTF staff to use after arriving on-scene. The intent of the JTFE is to produce a seamless transition of local command and control between the forward-deployed MEU(SOC) commander who is first to arrive on-scene, to the inbound JTF commander who will accomplish the wider mission. The Marine Corps already recognizes some greater potential in the JTFE as a C2 concept, and this paper advocates broadening the JTFE C2 concept whereby the MEU(SOC) actually performs selected JTF C2 functions until the JTF arrives. The MEU(SOC) can perform this wider C2 role, and it requires only the commitment to expand the concept and some additional training for selected members of the MEU(SOC) staff to realize this enhancment.

However, there remains potentially an even greater concept for the JTFE. In its role as a crisis response force, the MEU(SOC) possesses the mandate and capability to solve many crises and to shape nearly all. With the trend toward global urbanization, the NCA and regional CinC's increasingly expect to commit forces to the urban littorals where precise, swift and early action in urban environments can create conditions that significantly favor follow-on offensive operations in the city proper. The MEU(SOC) possessees the potential to create the conditions that allow for a seamless transition to deliberate offensive operations in an urban environment by a larger JTF. This notion suggests that the JTFE could become an operational concept.

Conclusion: The Marine Corps should develop in its forward-deployed MEU(SOC)'s a specific missioin capabilty to perform JTF C2 functions and to package this capability among its supporting missions profile. Furthermore, the Marine Corps should develop an Urban JTF Enabling capability and package it as a fifth category of operations a MEU(SOC) can perform. Such a capability constitutes a much expanded definition of JTFE, and one which begins to reflect the full potential of the concept.

The influential twentieth-century linguistic philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein argued that real understanding rests on the precise use of language and universally agreed upon meanings. Without clarity and common understanding, Wittgenstein observed, we can never really communicate our ideas with one-another effectively.[1] The Marine Corps' emerging concept for a Joint Task Force Enabler (JTFE) reflects the difficulties Wittgenstein anticipated when we don't share a common understanding of what a term means. The Joint Task Force Enabler is potentially a critical concept, both in its operational scope and in the importance it could have for how the Marine Corps contributes to national security. However, the term and the concept itself are poorly understood and inconsistently applied. It means something to everyone, but evidently not the same thing to anyone. And despite the fact that the Marine Corps currently advances the Joint Task Force Enabler among the specific capabilities of its forward deployed Marine Expeditionary Units, the concept remains cloudy and unresolved.[2] In fact, the JTFE is, according to the Marine Corps' doctrinal "point-man" on the subject, Major Dave Overton, "about as clear as mud."[3]

This lack of clarity, however, does not suggest a lack of interest on the part of senior military leaders nor a failure within the Marine Corps to develop the idea more fully. On 12 August 1997, then Commanding General of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Lieutenant General P. K. Van Riper, expressed his plan to "develop a standardized concept for the JTF Enabler capability."[4] In the months following his announcement, the Marine Corps has hosted a

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1 Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 858.

2 Marine Corps Order 3120.9A, *Policy for Marine Expeditionary Unit* (Special Operations Capable) (MEU(SOC)), p. 14.

3 Major David Overton, USMC, project officer, Warfighting Development Integration Division, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, interview by author, 9 April 1998.

4 Marine Corps Combat Development Command to Commander, Marine Corps Forces,

three-day conference on JTFE,[5] assigned an action officer to develop the concept within the Combat Development Command's Warfighting Development Integration Division, as well as published a draft *Concept for a Joint Task Force (JTF) Enabler Capability within the Amphibious Ready Group/Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable).*[6] The results of these efforts, and the more refined notion of the JTFE that has emerged in the draft *Concept* paper point to the Marine Corps' intention to define the JTFE primarily as a suite of command and control hardware the forward deployed MEU(SOC) erects and initially operates before the larger Joint Task Force staff arrives in the area to assume responsibility for operations. This notion seems borne-out by the fact that the Commander, Marine Forces Atlantic, supported by the Marine Corps Systems Command, has entered into the development of a "miniaturized JTFE equipment suite" with the Sanders Division of Lockheed Martin corporation.[7] "The Enabler has already been employed as part of MEU operations," wrote the MARFORLANT commander, LtGen C. E. Wilhelm, on 18 Aug 1997 in response to LtGen Van Riper's plan to standardize the concept.[8] He goes on to add that MARFORLANT has made major strides in "developing and fielding" the JTFE, and the "value of the capability that we offer is now universally accepted by the CINCDOMS we serve." The implications seem quite clear that the emerging JTFE concept is understood by the CINCS to be a valuable piece of equipment MEU(SOC)'s carry on

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Atlantic, subject: "Joint Task Force (JTF) Enabler Capability, R 121100Z Aug 97.

5 Marine Corps Combat Development Conference, Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) / Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (MEU(SOC)) As Joint Task Force Enabler: *The 1997 Conference Report:* DOTES Assessment and Plan of Action and Milestones, Warfighting Development Integration Division (C-39), Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Quantico, VA, 21 Nov 97.

6 Draft, *Concept for a Joint Task Force Enabler Capability within the ARG/MEU(SOC),* 17 Oct. 1997.

7 Marine Corps Forces Atlantic to Commander, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, subject: "Joint Task Force Enabler Capability, P 181839Z Aug 97.

8 Ibid.

deployments, and which offers a sophisticated and previously unavailable command and control capability for incoming JTF staffs.

Innovation and, presumably, improvement within a military organization come from "the institutional willingness to raise embarrassing questions," the military historian Williamson Murray recently remarked[9]. The point of this study, then, is to pose a few embarrassing questions about the direction the Marine Corps is evidently heading with the concept of the JTF Enabler. Maybe we have not set our sights high enough on the potential of this concept. Before the JTFE is commonly understood and universally accepted as a command and control package marketed to CINCS as an enhancement of the support mission capabilities provided by the MEU(SOC), there may be value in taking another look at how we view the JTFE concept. And in considering anew some of the pressing concerns of the National Command Authority and the CINCS, another review of the Joint Task Force Enabler may reveal greater potential in the concept than we currently realize.

This look at the JTFE concept also incorporates the notion that the trend toward increasing urbanization in the world will necessarily see a commensurate increase of American force commitments and American military operations in urban environments. And as America's forward-deployed crisis response forces, MEU(SOC)'s will surely find themselves increasingly operating in the world's cities. In light of these assumptions, this paper aims to consider the following three questions. As a first-response force that markets a capability to better "enable" operations by a larger Joint Task Force, can the MEU(SOC) provide a wider C2 JTF enabling capability than appears to be planned? Moreover, does the current notion of the JTFE tap the full

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[9] Professor Williamson Murray, “Innovation in the Interwar Years,” seminar presented at the U.S. Marine Corps School of Advanced Warfighting, 5 Nov. 1997.

potential of the concept? And if not, what might the MEU(SOC) do differently to best enhance its effectiveness as an **urban** JTF enabler?

The Intent of The JTFE

Despite some lingering confusion on the "course and carry" of the concept, the purpose of the JTFE is well founded and clearly explained. Both the theory of a JTFE and the execution of the concept to-date reflect a common appreciation that the whole idea is to provide a "seamless transition" of local command and control from a MEU(SOC) commander who was the first to arrive on scene, to the JTF commander who was subsequently tasked to accomplish a wider mission. Note this sentence, as the intent is central to our later consideration of the potential of the JTFE concept. The draft *Concept* of 17 Oct 1997 likewise provides a clear definition, asserting that enabling is "a time-sensitive mission generally of short duration assigned to an Amphibious Ready Group/Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) to make possible the introduction of a Joint Task Force Headquarters."[10]

The comments of those who have gained some practical experience in fielding the JTF Enabler fully support this definition. In a series of articles written about the first experimental use of the JTFE during an actual deployment, the 26th MEU(SOC) public affairs staff stated that the point of The Enabler was for the MEU to "tailor its planning staff and communications assets to 'open a door' for a JTF headquarters to fall in on."[11] Reflecting on JTFE employment during the 26th MEU(SOC) deployment during late 1996 and early 1997, Col Emerson Gardner, the MEU commander explained that JTFE missions involve two phases. The first phase is an amphibious operation to secure a lodgment. "We secured an area ashore," he remarked, "using

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[10] Draft *Concept* paper, op. cit., p. 1.

[11] Sergeant Mark D. Olivia, USMC, "Seamless Transition: Marines take a giant leap into the future of joint operations," *Marines* (January 1997), p. 4.

the MEU's major subordinate elements." Next step was to employ the Enabler. "To meet the JTF Enabler requirements," Emerson added, "we then set up a command element ashore using some additional communications equipment to support the follow--on force--the Joint Task Force."[12]

This additional communications equipment is the TSC-93B+, a super high frequency satellite communications van staffed by twelve Marines that allows the user to establish an immediate and sustained secure uplink to the regional CINC. The direct value of this platform, and why it has been called *The* JTF Enabler is that it employs a C2 architecture familiar to the CINC staff, as well as the fact that the TSC-93B+ is compatible with communications systems regularly used by the other services in a joint operating environment. In short, not only can a MEU(SOC) commander establish effective communications with the CINC staff before the Joint Task Force arrives to assume control of an operation, but the JTF Staff can also "fall in" on familiar equipment and immediately begin to exercise command and control without first erecting another communications suite.[13]

The Evolution of Current Thinking on The JTFE

The JTFE was a product borne of the Commandant's Initial Planning Guidance wherein he directed the Marine Corps to assume the vanguard position in joint operations. Among his specific taskings, Gen Krulak directed that CG, MCCDC "explore the development of JTF C2 capabilities within the MEU which would enable the smooth integration of follow on JTF HQ's." Efforts at Quantico proceeded quickly with the establishment of cross-functional working groups tasked to identify concepts against the "pillars of doctrine, organization, training and education,

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12 Ibid.

13 Marine Corps Forces, Atlantic memorandum for the Commandant of the Marine Corps, subject: JTF Enabler, 3000 over Comdr, 16 Dec. 1996.

equipment and supporting establishments (DOTES)."[14] By 5 Mar 96, CG MCCDC proposed a POA&M that involved using the 26 MEU(SOC) as a test bed. MARFORLANT became the lead-agent in translating the Commandant's intent and the CG, MCCDC's initial concept into a practical capability.

Citing a "lack of existing doctrinal basis for the concept of a JTF Enabler," LtGen Wilhelm approached the problem by considering the "traditional Marine Corps role of enabling follow-on forces" as the conceptual basis for developing the JTF Enabler capability. Before determining how to create the JTFE capability, MARFORLANT developed these "enabling functions": secure a lodgment, provide initial C2 connectivity, provide on-scene tactical-level situation awareness, provide initial CSS, and provide other initial support to help clarify "what the JTF Enabler needs to do."[15] 'Enabling' thus defined involved three capabilities already embedded in the MEU(SOC): establishing a lodgment as part of its existing amphibious operations capabilities, and providing short-term combat service and other support as part of MEU (SOC) supporting operations capabilities. What remained to be done was to create a means to provide initial C2 connectivity to the regional CINC and for the follow-on JTF staff, and to deliver on-scene tactical-level situation awareness through this C2 connectivity. The solution was what has come to be widely referred to as *"The* JTF Enabler," a SHF SATCOM system available in the Marine Corps' inventory in the form of the TSC-93B SATCOM van, along with the necessary equipment to allow the TSC-93B to operate optimally within a MEU(SOC) headquarters. Hence, the JTF Enabler concept became an appropriate response to the functions it was initially designed to address.

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14 MCCDC, 21 Nov 1997 Conference Report, op. cit., p. 21.

15 MARFORLANT memo for CMC, op. cit., p. 1

The first response to the direction issued by the Commandant was in a 16 Dec 96 memo from the CG, MARFORLANT, LtGen Wilhelm, to Gen. Krulak in which the JTF Enabler was presented as "a complete package - from satellite signal reception via TSC-93B to routers and servers to data on the screens of application systems available to operators who can translate this data into useful information." It is important to relate exactly how the JTFE concept was first fielded in order to fully understand why confusion follows the concept now. In translating the Commandant's guidance into action, the concept of a JTF Enabler capability inherent within the MEU(SOC) became a "packaged" communications system. LtGen Wilhelm summarized the JTFE capability in terms of a "C4 Package," and explained that the JTFE capability the 26th MEU(SOC) would possess and test during deployment was essentially the command and control connectivity function:

> "The C2 portion of the JTF Enabler is generally additive in terms of the MEU's traditional expeditionary capabilities. The extant MEU Command Element's COC is reinforced with a 12 man communications/data support team which supports the AN/TSC-93B SHF Satellite communications terminal. Capable of pulling 512K of bandwidth, this terminal supplies the signal to the routers and servers which provide connectivity into the NIPRNET, SIPRNET, JWICS, DSN telephone and AUTODIN message networks. User applications provide access to the Global Command and Control System (GCCS), Contingency Theater Air Planning System (CTAPS), and Joint Deployable Intelligence Support System (JDISS). The full package includes tents, generators, three HMMWV's and one five-ton truck."[16]

As is often the case, first impressions are lasting ones. The introduction of the JTFE to the operating forces, and therefore into the lexicon of Marine capabilities was as a communications package, carried along on ARG shipping like other pieces of equipment, and set up ashore to gain access to the Common Operating Environment of the Global Command and Control System.

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16 Ibid.

Interestingly, the *Concept* paper that reached a final draft version last October advances a much enhanced view of JTF Enabler capabilities and reflects the Marine Corps' growing appreciation for the enormous potential of the MEU(SOC) as an enabler of JTF C2. The *Concept* paper clearly views the MEU(SOC) not just as the owner and erector of sophisticated C2 systems for the JTF headquarters staff to assume upon arrival, but as a force in possession of equipment that allows it to provide a range of services which, when performed while waiting for the Joint Task Force to arrive, can truly provide for the seamless transition between commanders intended. More specifically, the *Concept* paper went beyond the five functions MARFORLANT used to determine "what a JTF Enabler needed to do," and instead advanced eleven functions and tasks drawn from the Universal Joint Task List (UJTL) that are "germane to the JTF Enabler capability."[17] These eleven functions suggest more of what a MEU(SOC) can do *with* the TSC-93B to perform as an interim JTF headquarters before the actual JTF commander and staff arrive.[18] More importantly, these functions present the foundation for a valid case that a seamless C2 transition occurs not when the JTF arrives, claims the TSC-93B, and then starts to assess the situation, but rather one when the JTF headquarters, having already been made aware of a situation developed by the MEU(SOC), arrive to assume responsibility for the operation. This is

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[17] Draft *Concept* paper, op. cit., pp. 2-4.

[18] The functions/tasks outlined in the Draft Concept paper reference citations in the Universal Joint Task List (UJTL); OP 5.5.4 Deploy Joint Force Headquarters Advance Element; OP 5.4 Command Subordinate Operational Forces; OP2.1.4 Allocate Intelligence Resources in Theater of Operations/JOA; OP 5.2 Assess Operational Situation; OP 5.1.1 Communicate Operational Information; OP 5.7 Coordinate and Integrate Joint/Multinational and Interagency Support; OP 4.4 Coordinate Support for Forces in Theater of Operations/JOA; OP 6.2 Provide Protection for Operational Forces, Means, and Noncombatants; OP 6.3 Protect Systems and Capabilities in Theater of Operations/JOA; OP 6.5 Provide Security for Operational Forces and Means; and, OP 5.8 Provide Public Affairs in Theater of Operations/JOA. The significance of these functions in the Concept paper reflects a fundamental conceptual shift for the JTFE, and demonstrate the intention to expand the JTFE concept beyond employment of the TVS-93B.

an important distinction, and it lies at the heart of the MEU(SOC)'s capacity to tap the full potential of the JTFE C2 concept.

Expanding the Potential of The JTFE for C2

The Marine Corps is clearly "on to something" with the JTFE, and the *Concept* paper reflects the fact that we now intend the JTFE to mean more than the deployment and setup of a sophisticated communications van. The key to tapping the full potential of the JTFE is to embrace the notion that the MEU(SOC) must become a C2 service-provider to the inbound JTF, capable of executing JTF C2 functions **before** the JTF arrives to assume direct control of an operation. In expanding the concept, then, we stand to achieve greater potential by determining what the JTF needs and, more specifically, by performing as many of the C2 functions the JTF staff would perform for themselves. By addressing these requirements, the MEU(SOC) JTFE allows the JTF commander and staff to assume "a work in progress" when they arrive on-scene to begin leading the operation. There are those with greater C2 expertise who are better prepared to develop these ideas more fully. However, the aim of this paper is to explore the possibility of enhancing the potential of the JTFE concept. As such, the following serves as a "line of departure" in developing the full potential of the JTFE as a C2 provider for the inbound JTF.

If the JTF commander and his staff are viewed as the MEU(SOC) JTFE customers, then the most appropriate way to determine how to provide the best C2 service is to ask ourselves, "what does the JTF want?" A logical answer is, "they want what is important to them." The task, then, is to precisely deduce what C2 functions are important to the JTF headquarters, then to develop the capability to perform those functions within the MEU(SOC) JTFE. In a 1994 research study for SAIC COMSYSTEMS, Rich Hayes-Roth and Lee Erman of Teknowledge Federal Systems conducted an exhaustive review of "Crisis Support Team" C2 requirements, and they published

their results as the *Joint Task Force Architecture Specification.*[19] While the authors' aim was to determine the exact hardware and software resources a JTF staff needs to "plan and perform effectively," they first determined the "seventeen principal functional areas of concern of the JTF" in executing C2. These "principal functions" equate to a list of JTF "customer needs," and the MEU(SOC), therefore, can present the JTF staff with a" work in progress" if it performs these functions. In short, the TSC-93B van provides the connectivity to meet these requirements, now the Marine Corps should hasten to develop within the MEU(SOC) the capability to perform the following C2 functions for the JTF:

1. Standup (and down) the Marine Corps component staff and systems.
2. Receive orders and clarify the JTF mission.
3. Send Reports.
4. Setup and operate communication links.
5. Organize activities, assign tasks, and manage staff functions.
6. Set objectives and constraints.
7. Assess the situation.
8. Generate and evaluate alternative plans.
9. Package and communicate assessments and plans.
10. Request information.
11. Supply information.
12. Evaluate and combine pieces of information (for assessments, plans, and communications).
13. Give orders and clarifications to other component forces arriving on-scene.
14. Accept reports.
15. Monitor for and adapt to significant changes.
16. Use and update (computerized) data and objects.
17. Run computer models.

Clearly only some of these requirements could be fulfilled by the forward-deployed MEU(SOC), while the JTF staff would retain some for themselves even during the initial stages of an operation. For example, the JTF staff would certainly retain requirement # 8 (Generate and Evaluate Alternative Plans); however, these plans would be developed with the aid of reports

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[19] Rick Hayes-Roth and Lee Erman, *Joint Task Force Architecture Specification (JTFAS).* JTF Reference Architecture (text only), Microsoft Internet Explorer, 11 Aug 1997 (4:58.05 PM), p. 12 of 121.

(requirement # 3) transmitted to the JTF, as the MEU(SOC) staff assesses the situation (requirement # 7) on-scene. The net result of this expanded role for the MEU(SOC) JTFE is that we go beyond what it is presently a packaged communication system for the JTF headquarters to "fall-in on," and instead develop the JTFE as a MEU(SOC) capability to **provide** initial JTF C2 functions in forward deployed locations.

This explores only one aspect of the JTFE concept, arguing for a much wider and potentially more valuable role for the MEU(SOC) JTFE in the area of command and control. But does the JTFE realize its full potential by performing a larger command and control function? I argue that this role for the JTFE is still not ambitious enough. The potential for a truly expansive notion of the JTF Enabler concept rests in our image of the MEU(SOC) as a forward-deployed crisis response force that doesn't just pave the way for a JTF to arrive and solve problems, but as a force that expects to solve problems on its own.

Crisis Response; Expanding the JTFE Concept

Inherent in the notion of even an expanded JTFE is the presumption that the ARG / MEU(SOC) can only achieve so much by itself, and that a larger Joint Task Force will be called upon to ultimately solve the crisis. But we know better, and in a recent *Marine Corps Gazette* article titled "The United States Marine Corps: Our Nation's Force-in-Readiness for the 21st Century," Gen. Krulak reiterated his position that forward deployed Marine forces, "must be capable of acting on short notice and without immediate support from other warfighting forces." [20] Citing the 1952 Congressional debate on military readiness following American forces' early performance in the Korean War, the Commandant reinforces the idea that the Marine Corps

[20] Gen Charles C. Krulak, USMC, "The United States Marine Corps: Our Nation's Force-in-Readiness for the 21st Century." *Marine Corps Gazette*, Vol. 82, no. 4 (April 1998), p. 18.

fulfills the nation's need for a strong force-in-readiness, that is "versatile, fast-moving, and hard-hitting," and one that can be called-upon to "prevent the growth of potentially large conflagrations by prompt and vigorous action during their incipient stages."[21]

The forces that stand the best chance of arriving on-scene early enough to "prevent the growth" of crises are our MEU(SOC)'s, whose purpose is to "provide the National Command Authorities and geographic combatant commanders with an effective means of dealing with the uncertainties of future threats, by providing forward-deployed units which offer unique opportunities for a variety of quick reaction, sea-based, crisis response options."[22] Implicit in this description of MEU(SOC) capability is the assumption that our forces, once on the ground, are going to move to solve the crisis whether a JTF is inbound or not. In those instances when the crisis will require a JTF, the Marine Corps expects to do something more than setup the TSC-93B van and perform command and control functions. And it is likewise almost certain that once communications are in place, the JTF commander will digest the MEU(SOC) commander's reports and reply, "good, Colonel, now do something productive about it until the rest of us get there." And therein lies the greatest potential of the JTFE concept – as a packaged capability that enables the JTF to quickly transition to decisive operations.

The Urban Battleground

Roger Barnett, a professor of naval warfare studies at the Naval War College recently observed that, "to achieve U.S. security objectives it is necessary to anticipate the environment in which future military operations may be conducted."[23] Strategic scholars, policy makers, and

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21 Ibid. p. 16.

22 Policy For (MEU(SOC)), op. cit., p. 2.

23 Roger W. Barnett, "Grasping 2010 with Naval Forces." *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 17 (Autumn/Winter 1997-98), p. 25.

military leaders alike suggest that the military will increasingly find itself operating in urban areas, especially the urban littorals. In his keynote address to the Marine Corps Command and Staff College on 5 Aug 1997, Richard Armitage explained this move toward global urbanization as well as its potential dangers. "Extreme population explosion, especially in the Third World, and continued mass migration to cities will place great pressure on urban infrastructure -- creating huge centers of disenfranchised people who come to cities seeking a better livelihood, but whose arrival, ironically, compounds the inability of their governments to provide better opportunities for them." He went on to add that, "the result is more and larger concentrations of increasingly frustrated people concentrated in mega-cities that can easily become hotbeds of governmental opposition and epicenters of local conflict, regional disruption, and international disorder."[24]

The Marine Corps has absorbed the implications of this trend toward global urbanization and drawn a "clear inference: naval expeditionary forces must be prepared to operate where political, cultural, economic, and military frictions intersect. That intersection is the urban littoral."[25] Experimental efforts presently underway in the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory specifically connect the tide of urbanization to the Commandant's determination that MEU(SOC)'s be capable of "projecting power ashore in the face of armed opposition."[26] Among the issues Urban Warrior Experiments aim to address is the notion that "applying the right force early may reduce the difficulty follow-on forces have in defeating an enemy." Herein lies the

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[24] Richard Armitage, "Keynote Address." Lecture presented at the U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Quantico, VA, Aug 97.

[25] Draft, *Urban Warrior Experimental Framework* Commandant's Warfighting Laboratory, included in the material for Course 7300, Future War, U. S. Marine Corps School of Advance Warfighting, p. 2

[26] Gen Krulak, op. cit., p. 19.

intellectual basis for expanding the JTFE concept beyond the realm of command and control. Larger JTF forces will be called upon to grapple with large-scale urban conflicts, and will certainly be necessary to fight successfully in the mega-cities of tomorrow. However, as the MCWL posits, and modern military history proves, what enables a larger force to successfully assault a city are successful operations first "in critical areas of the extended battlefield surrounding dense urban areas."[27]

Could not the notion of the MEU(SOC) as a JTF Enabler include the capability to successfully operate in these critical areas of the extended urban battlefield and therefore *enable* the JTF to seamlessly transition to decisive operations within the city? Yes, it could because to do so increases the contribution the Marine Corps can make to national security. What would it take to provide this capability, then, and do we possess the means to pursue it? Urban Warrior is exploring new concepts for how the Marine Corps will operate in an urban environment, and the changes that will ensue from these experiments will surely enhance the future capability of a modest force to successfully "penetrate and operate in dense urban littorals."[28] The notional concept of an urban JTFE capability suggested here, however, focuses not on the MEU(SOC)'s ability to fight inside a city in the near future, but rather explores its potential to shape the urban battlefield for a larger JTF follow-on force here and now.

The IDF Filter

One means to determine what military activity enables a force to successfully mount deliberate offensive operations within a dense urban environment is to conduct historical case studies. In pursuing this methodology, I specifically sought historical examples of urban combat

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27 Draft, *Urban Warrior Experimental Framework,* op. cit., p. 4.

28 Ibid.

that met the following criteria: (1) the battles must be recent and well documented; (2) to serve as valid benchmarks for current MEU(SOC) capabilities, the attacking forces needed to possess modern weaponry and a combined arms capability; (3) the attacking forces should possess the capability to employ and, if possible, actually execute amphibious operations as part of their offensive operations; (4) the attacker would employ U.S. as opposed to Soviet-style doctrine; and, (5) to test the validity of their methods, the attacking force should succeed. Three comparatively recent battles meet all of these stated criteria: Jerusalem during the Six Day War in 1967, and Sidon and Tyre, which occurred during the Israeli 1982 offensive against the PLO in Lebanon. The Israeli Defense Forces were the attackers in each of these battles.

Battle Synopses

Jerusalem. The Six Day War began on 5 Jun 1967. Jordanian **defenses centered on strong-points that had been constructed on high ground in and around** Jerusalem, roughly along the 1948 Armistice Line that served as the Israel-Jordan border and divided the city. Israel had expected only token resistance, but when Jordan swiftly deployed the reinforced 27th Infantry Brigade, two additional infantry battalions and a tank battalion to seize and defend the city, Israel immediately launched an operation with a parachute brigade, an infantry brigade, and an armored infantry that included 32 Sherman tanks to secure all of Jerusalem and the West Bank. **The Israeli plan was to seize the high ground overlooking Israeli territory from the Jordanian forces, then cut off reinforcement routes into the city, followed by a deliberate attack to secure the city and seize key terrain beyond the old Armistice Line.** The attack began in the late-afternoon on the 5th, with the Israeli armored brigade attacking north of Jerusalem, while their infantry brigade attacked from West Jerusalem south of the Old City. By 2:00 a.m. on June 6th, Israeli paratroopers assaulted across the Armistice Line and began to

overrun enemy strong-points on the Jordanian West Bank. By 7:00 a.m., **the final Jordanian position on Ammunition Hill fell, and Israeli forces began their direct assault into the city.** Fighting within the city on the 6th was fierce and initially heavily contested, but **the speed and intensity of Israeli attacks** forced the Jordanian's to retreat eastward. At daybreak on the 7th, Israeli forces mounted their final attack to seize the Old City, only to find the Jordanian forces had retreated during the night.[29]

Sidon. At 11:00 a.m. on 6 Jun 1982, Israeli forces invaded Lebanon with seven divisional task forces. Sidon, the PLO headquarters in southern Lebanon and defended by about 1,500 PLO fighters, was a prime target of the IDF's Beka'a Forces Group, a composite corps of about 35,000 men and 800 tanks. While the scale of this attack offers little parallel, the Israeli plan and execution offer valuable insights into how a MEU(SOC) might "prevent the growth of potentially large conflagrations by prompt and vigorous action during their incipient stages." Israeli forces planned to advance rapidly up the southern Lebanese roads, and they **initially bypassed Sidon** in their northward advance up the coast. Simultaneous with this armored advance, **an IDF amphibious force landed at night on June 6th north of Sidon, on the outskirts of the city** at the mouth of the Alawi River, **blocked the coastal road,** and began moving inland. Other IDF forces moved rapidly north toward Sidon throughout the 7th, linked-up with the armored forces that initially bypassed the city and also with the amphibious force that landed the previous night and, by the morning of June 8th, **Sidon was encircled and isolated.** Districts known to be PLO **strongholds were pounded by artillery, naval gunfire and air attack.** Leaflets were dropped over the entire city warning residents to leave and not

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[29] This synopsis derives from reading J. Robert Moskins, *Among Lions: The Battle for Jerusalem June 5-7, 1967* (New York: Arbor, 1982).

harbor PLO fighters. The Israeli's launched a coordinated assault to clear the city, entering from the north, east, clearing buildings and interning all suspected PLO personnel. Resistance rapidly crumbled, and that which remained was limited mostly to sniping. The Israeli attack was very deliberate, and **if fired upon from a building, the IDF employed tanks in direct fire to eliminate the resistance.** By June 12th, remaining PLO forces withdrew to Beirut.[30]

Tyre. Like Sidon, the battle for the port city of Tyre began on June 6, 1982, and the Israeli operational concept was repeated with the same stunning success. **Rapid capture and neutralization of the city** was seen by the Israelis as a potential means to demoralize the PLO and to compel it to accept the inevitability of an Israeli victory. The success of the Israeli **plan hinged on the speed of their moves to surround the Tyre area.** Conversely, from the PLO **defenders' point of view, the issues were the degree to which that movement could be delayed and casualties could be inflicted** on the IDF. **The city was bypassed and cut off** during the major thrust up the coast. The Israeli 211th Armored Brigade, which followed the main Israeli thrust up the coast, attacked Tyre from the south. A small force staged **an amphibious landing** at Qasmiyya on the Litani River, **quickly isolated Tyre from the north, and moved on the city from this unexpected direction.** A third battle group attacked Tyre from the east on June 7th.. All told, the initial Israeli assault force numbered some 6,500 troops. The PLO defended the city with between 1,500 and 1,800 fighters. Leaflets and loudspeakers warned the inhabitants to leave the city or move to the beaches and to avoid sheltering of, or proximity to, PLO personnel. The defenders' **artillery and strong-point positions on high-ground outside the city were destroyed by air strikes.** Major pockets of resistance were

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[30] Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Arab-Israeli Military Balance and the Art of Operations* (Boston, University Press of America, 1987), pp. 61-71.

hit by aerial bombardment and naval gunfire in support of the ground attack. The Israelis conducted **aggressive reconnaissance and clearing operations.** Fire was deliberately drawn from the defenders and then overwhelming firepower was brought to bear on the located position. Tanks and direct-fire artillery were extensively used in the city, however, was carefully controlled land major damage was limited to concentrated areas of resistance. As in Sidon, the Israeli forces conducted thorough house-to-house clearing within the city in PLO resistance areas.[31]

Implications for the MEU(SOC)

The informed student of urban military operations should find nothing revolutionary about the Israeli experiences cited in these three case studies. What these three battles do offer, however, are some specific ideas about how MEU(SOC) forces can be employed to shape the urban battlefield *in anticipation of* the arrival of a larger Joint Task Force. The key feature of Israeli planning in all three of these conflicts was not to immediately and directly attack defending forces inside the city with overwhelming force from the direction from which they must expect it would come, but rather *to mold a more favorable tactical situation at the outset.*[32] The operational concept was to cutoff the city before the attack, and to leverage speed, surprise and movement in doing so. Three distinct advantages arise for the attacker by isolating the urban battlefield. First, it serves to prevent the escape and reinforcement of defenders inside the city. This effectively freezes the situation inside the city and helps define the scope of the battle that may follow. Second, the act of isolating defenders brings with it the secondary and asynchronous benefit of creating a sense of isolation and hopelessness that might precipitate an earlier

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[31] This synopsis derives from reading R. D. McLaurin, *The Battle of Tyre* (Aberdeen, MD: U.S. Army Human Engineering Laboratory, 1987).

[32] Ibid., p. 23.

surrender at lower cost for the attackers. Third, beyond increasing the attacker's options for the direction from which to initiate decisive operations against the city, the move to surround the urban area intensifies the defender's dilemma and forces him to dissipate his forces, thereby making it easier to penetrate the city-proper at the onset of decisive operations. The operational implications for a MEU(SOC) are clear - if it can isolate the urban area quickly, or at a minimum gain and hold key terrain outside the city, it creates favorable conditions for a deliberate assault into the city.

There are also clear lessons to absorb about the value of specific weapons systems in the fight to control the approaches to a city. A technical memorandum written for the U.S. Army Human Engineering Laboratory in 1987 noted that "there has been a growing belief that armor has no role in city fighting."[33] The authors go on to add, however, that a careful review of urban combat from WW II onward clearly suggests that "the role of attacking armor is important, particularly at the outer perimeter in operations to isolate the city.[34] In each case cited above, Israeli operations to control the approaches to the city included not only tanks, but sizable contingents of armored infantry. The surprise and speed of movement that was central to Israeli forces' quick seizure of the key terrain on the outskirts of Jerusalem, Sidon, and Tyre was made possible by the use of armor and armored infantry. This has direct implications for the mix of forces, equipment, and major end items with which the MEU(SOC) deploys. ARG shipping space is a finite resource, but as regards the MEU(SOC)'s ability to *mold a more favorable tactical situation at the outset of an urban conflict,* armor and armored infantry are instrumental.

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[33] R.D. McLaurin, et. al., Modern Experience in City Combat (Aberdeen, MD: U.S. Army Human Engineering Laboratory, 1987), p. 37.

[34] Ibid

Although not a factor in the three battles reviewed here, the 1987 U.S. Army Human Engineering Laboratory memorandum advances three "operationalized hypotheses" that have clear implications for MEU(SOC) capabilities. Their review of modern urban combat led the authors to conclude that attackers rarely consider operations against water, power, and telephone resources in their plans, despite the fact that raids against the key facilities that control these resources could have had a crippling effect on the opposition and created extraordinary problems in sustaining an organized defense. Inherent in the MEU(SOC) is the capability to conduct Direct Action Operations, which are defined as "short duration strikes and small-scale offensive action by employing precision raids…and direct assault using close quarters battle skills, emplacement of munitions and other devices, standoff attacks by fire from air, ground, or maritime platforms; or providing terminal guidance for precision-guided munitions."[35] The implications here are self-evident. Precision attacks against key water, power, and telephone infrastructure should prove to be highly effective in diminishing the urban defender's ability and willingness to resist, and the MEU(SOC) already possesses the capability to conduct precisely these kinds of attacks.

Application

The line of argument thus far runs as follows: the JTFE is a valid, though still unfinished concept, and the fact that it is still evolving provides us the with chance to continue shaping its dimensions; the intent of the JTFE is to produce a "seamless transition" of local responsibility for operations; to-date, the JTFE has emerged, and been marketed to CINCS as a sophisticated communications package for the JTF commander and staff to use when they arrive on-scene; the Marine Corps, however, recognizes some greater potential in the JTFE as a C2 concept; this paper advocates broadening the JTFE C2 concept whereby the MEU(SOC) staff actually

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[35] Policy For (MEU(SOC)), op. cit., p. 10.

performs the JTF's C2 functions for the operation until the JTF staff arrives, organizes and assumes the "work in progress;" achieving the capability to perform these functions requires only the commitment to do so and investment in training MEU(SOC) to perform JTF C2 functions; in its role as a crisis response force, the MEU(SOC) possesses the mandate, will, and the capability to solve many crises and, to some degree, to shape nearly all; with the trend toward global urbanization, the NCA and CINC's increasingly expect to commit Joint Task Forces to operations in the urban littorals; precise, swift and early action in urban environments can create conditions that significantly favor the offense in a subsequent deliberate attack into a city; the MEU(SOC) possesses the potential to create the conditions that allow for a "seamless transition" to deliberate offensive operations in an urban environment by a larger JTF. Having the real capability to do so, however, may require some change in MEU(SOC) organization and structure.[36]

The specific tradeoffs in force composition, equipment, and mission capability required to change the current organization of the MEU(SOC) are not the purview of this paper. Assessing the JTFE concept and advancing the idea for an expanded version of it is. Of the three implications for MEU(SOC) operations that emerge from the Israeli case studies only one, the benefit of robust armored forces, should have a direct impact on MEU(SOC) task organization. Expanding the amount of armor that deploys with the MEU(SOC) unquestionably enhances its ability to *mold a more favorable tactical situation at the outset of an urban conflict.* In discussions with two experienced armor officers, both suggest that the LAV, vice the MlA1, provides greater flexibility and promise if more are added to the MEU(SOC) organization.[37]

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[36] Ibid., pp. 2-8.

[37] Major Jack R. Jones, USA, student, U.S. Marine Corps School of Advanced Warfighting, interview by author, 12 May 1998; Major Laurent O. Baker, USMC, student, U.S. Marine Corps

However, as mentioned above, ARG shipping is a finite resource and, if more armor in the form of more LAVs and associated infantry were added, something would surely have to go. The study on MEU(SOC) mission conducted by Major Chris Proudfoot, USMC conducted a critical assessment of MEU(SOC) organization versus the execution of missions actually performed, and his study offers a reasonable starting-place to identify what could be replaced if the MEU(SOC) adopted an Urban JTFE capability.[38] As regards the other implications for MEU(SOC) operations stemming from the Israeli experiences, the Marine Corps not only possesses the capabilities, but excels in them. The concept of leveraging speed, surprise and emphasizing movement that was instrumental to Israeli success in isolating the cities, could well be lifted from a page of the Marine Corps' maneuver warfighting philosophy. And as suggested earlier, the capacity to attack a city's key water, power, and telephone nodes is inherent in the MEU(SOC)'s Direct Action Operations capability.

Conclusion

The Marine Corps remains the stomping ground of innovators, experimenters, and problem-solvers. And because of its innovative heritage, the Marine Corps also remains tolerant of those quixotic ventures that, while well meaning, may miss the mark. As the saying goes, nothing ventured, nothing gained. The original concept and fielding of the Joint Task Force Enabler as a "C4 Package" was a verifiable leap forward in MEU(SOC) capability. Moreover, as the CINC's reaction attests, the JTFE as a C2 concept is a valued Marine contribution to a regional CINC's arsenal. Nonetheless, we have not set our sights high enough on the potential of

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School of Advanced Warfighting, interview by author, 7 May 1998.

[38] Major C. N. Proudfoot. *Forward Deployed 2020.* Research Paper. (Quantico, VA: U.S. Marine Corps School of Advanced Warfighting, 30 May 1997)

this concept, and while the notion of a MEU(SOC) JTFE is still malleable, we should expand our definition and greatly enhance its scope.

The Marine Corps should develop in its forward-deployed MEU(SOC)'s a specific mission capability to **perform** JTFE C2 functions and to package this capability among its supporting missions profile. Moreover, anyone who looks at the future through non tinted glasses recognizes the coming increase in both MEU(SOC) and JTF urban operations. A quick response force that can effectively perform JTF C2 functions, that has a refined sense of urban intelligence requirements, the subscribes to an operational concept for urban combat emphasizing speed, flexibility, and the quick seizure and control of selected avenues of approach, that can conduct precision attacks on key urban facilities, that can recognize when it possesses the capability to resolve a crisis alone, but also retains the perspective to recognize when it can not, and which takes the initiative to shape the battlefield in anticipation of a seamless transition to deliberate operations by a larger JTF, is a force that can solve military problems in the coming years. The Marine Corps possesses such forces already, but we must fully develop an **Urban JTF Enabling** capability and package it as a fifth category of operations a MEU(SOC) can perform.[39] Such a capability constitutes a much expanded definition of the JTFE, and one which begins to reflect the potential of the concept.

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[39] The others are Amphibious Operations, Direct Action Operations, Military Operations Other Than War, and Supporting Operations.

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